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ABSTRACT

This paper offers an action plan that facilitates the implementation of educational reform in New York State by taking into consideration the major recommendations of four recognized publications: "A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century," "The Revolution That Is Overdue: Looking Toward the Future of Teaching and Learning," "Time for Results: The Governor's 1991 Report on Education," and "Tommorrow's Teachers: A Report of the Holmes Group." The action plan implores superintendents to ready their districts' internal and external constituencies for statewide restructuring and reform efforts by clarifying, identifying, and dealing with the major political, legal, financial, economic, and conceptual (philosophical) issues. It requires policymakers and superintendents jointly to pinpoint leadership for reform components within the total reform initiatives suggested by the four national reports. Furthermore, it describes a revised organizational framework within which statewide policymakers and superintendents may collaborate to identify financial resources and to implement meaningful educational change. (JAM)

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From Recommendations To Reality

A Paper On School Reform Issues
Developed by

New York State Council of School Superintendents
Ad Hoc Committee (1987)

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PREFACE

This paper was prepared by school superintendents for school superintendents. While it is intended for use by the members of the New York State Council of School Superintendents, we hope that it will also receive the attention of the Commissioner of Education, members of the Board of Regents, State Legislators, the Governor, School Boards, and others who bear, in part, the overall responsibility for public education in New York.

Since 1983, a number of reports calling for education reform have been published. We believe that change is desirable and, therefore, instead of simply indicating neutrality, support for, or opposition to the specific recommendations contained in these reports, we propose a plan for action by educational leaders. The result is a paper that suggests that before major changes are made, mechanisms be put into place to determine the feasibility of selected recommendations and to test the validity of many of the assumptions made relative to the restructuring of public education.

Trial and error implementation of even the most desirable reform recommendations would be time consuming, costly, and frustrating. Further, failures resulting from premature and wholesale changes, without first testing the water on major reform initiatives, may prove fatal to the entire reform effort. There is too much at stake to automatically assume that because many of the recommendations have emanated from prestigious committees and task forces, that they can be translated into reality or that all would, indeed, lead to the improvement of public education.

The first wave of national educational reports created unprecedented public awareness of the needs of education. The second wave of national reports generated extensive lists of recommendations for dealing with perceived needs. Together, these documents provide reliable information on which school superintendents can base their recommendations for substantive change. They also provide the opportunity for superintendents , and impose the obligation, to ensure that reform initiatives, and perhaps even a major restructuring of public education, will proceed in planned, deliberate, systematic and successful ways.

Finally, there are reasons to believe that if superintendents do not lead the reform movement in New York, both the first and second wave of reform reports will take their place alongside the Fleischman Report, the Rubin Report and other substantive reports as little more than interesting historical documents on which no major reform action was taken. If this should happen, educators fifteen years from now will be lamenting the lost reform opportunities of the 80's and 90's as they weigh the problems of education in the twenty-first century.

Glen Everhart

INTRODUCTION

"Strong leaders create strong schools! Research and common sense suggest that administrators can do a great deal to advance school reform. I believe that they must and will lead the second wave of reform."

William Clinton
Governor of Arkansas

Since the publication of A Nation at Risk in 1983, America has witnessed an unprecedented outpouring of studies and proposals calling for the dramatic improvement of the performance of its schools. In its earliest days the reform movement paid considerable attention to a number of essentially quantitative matters (e.g., lengthening the school year and day, increasing the testing and course requirements for the high school diploma, and raising the standards for the certification of teachers). While such reforms have yet to be fully digested, a more recent set of proposals, the "second wave," has tended to focus on more qualitative aspects of school improvement. It has identified, among other issues, the need to professionalize teaching, involve teachers more actively in the governance of schools, and make the school site both more autonomous and more responsive to its community.

Regardless of how we categorize the large and growing reform literature, one conclusion is obvious and inescapable: Schools are being asked to change in significant ways and, while many have identified major impediments to school reform, the existence of constraints has in no way diminished the intensity of the charge to schools. Given both the enormous pressure to change and the major constraints impeding such change, schools have typically found themselves in the unenviable position of being urged to reform and being unable to implement the genuine reform that is expected.

Who will lead the schools through this labyrinth? Where can we find the leadership that will be required if schools are to succeed in the reform effort and surmount the obstacles to doing so? Curiously, the literature is almost silent about the question of leadership. Thus, while some writers have argued for investing teachers with more responsibility for school improvement, no one has identified the essential role a leader must play in setting the stage for change.

Historically, governmental agencies, state executive offices, quasi-governmental groups, and governing boards have not led the way for major reform initiatives. Clearly, the leadership has come from individuals within these organizations. Government and quasi-government agencies may provide the ways and means for reform and outline in general its direction, but seldom has the actual leadership for change come from these sources.

The attached paper will convey a number of fundamental beliefs.

1. Public education needs major reform and restructuring.

2. Public interest in, and support for, major reform has never been greater.

3. The issues identified in the reform literature cover many vital elements of total school improvement, but are almost silent about the leadership that is required to realize a significant reform effort.

4. Because a major restructuring of public education involves reform of major systems (e.g., school governance, curriculum development, teacher education and preparation, certification of teachers, teachers' compensation), no one organization or agency can be effective in implementing the total reform agenda.

5. Each major element in the reform literature should be tested for its validity before broad-based action is taken.

6. To accomplish change of this magnitude, an overall plan must be developed to test each major proposal of the literature. Such a plan must include provisions to accomplish specific tasks:

   raise the threshold of readiness for reform

   identify the key reform issues and constraints

   determine the location of leadership

   create an organizational framework for experimentation

   establish timelines

   identify needed resources

   test the validity of important reform recommendations

   provide research-backed data on which school improvement decisions can be made.

7. By both training and position, the Superintendent of Schools is best suited to provide the leadership needed to coordinate the type of testing and implementation required if the reform movement is to yield any lasting results.

We will also argue in the following pages that the Superintendent of Schools is in the best position to understand the interplay of legislation, regulation, school culture, and community expectations, which are the domains that must be addressed if real reform is to succeed. The leadership that superintendents presently provide in solving local problems should be available for planning at state and regional levels. In particular, expertise in building consensus among disparate interest groups will prove to be valuable if the reform proposals are to produce anything more than political friction and institutional paralysis.

This moment in educational history presents almost unparalleled potential for school improvement. At the same time, without re-establishing the superintendency as a strong leadership role, the decade of the 80's almost certainly will come to be seen as little more than a historical curiosity. The superintendent has the skills to bring real reform to life and, given the circumstances presently operative, the obligation to do so.

THE REPORTS

Many recent papers and reports could be considered part of the "second wave" documents that were written in response to A Nation At Risk, A Place Called School, Horace's Compromise, and similar publications of the mid-80's. Without ignoring, or diminishing the importance of the other works, this paper considers the contents and recommendations of four of the most widely recognized publications as being representative of all the education reform literature.

1. A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century
   Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, May 1986

2. The Revolution That Is Overdue; Looking Toward the Future of Teaching and Learning
   Report of the AFT Task Force on the Future of Education, July 1986

3. Time for Results: The Governor's 1991 Report on Education
   National Governor's Association Center for Policy and Analysis, August 1986

4. Tomorrow's Teachers: A Report of the Holmes Group
   The Holmes Group, Inc., November 1986

Concurrent to reacting to these reports it was also necessary to treat a limited number of reform issues as being exemplary of many issues covered. The eight topics listed here, and presented in greater detail in the next section, were considered to be some of the most significant of the hundreds of items contained in the various publications.

I Standards for the Teaching Profession
II Teacher Education and Preparation
III School Structure and Governance
IV Differentiated Staffing/Professional Advancement
V Collaborative Efforts (Public Schools, Colleges, Private Sector)
VI Teacher Compensation
VII Parent Involvement
VIII Technology in Education

ABSTRACTS OF THE REPORTS

This section of the paper abstracts the major points of the selected reports. It reflects the comments of each on eight important reform topics.

TOPIC I

STANDARDS FOR THE TEACHING PROFESSION

A National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

The AFT, Carnegie and Governor's Reports all recommend some form of national board to establish and maintain the standards of the profession.

The AFT version of this national, non-governmental board of the teaching profession would standardize certification so that it would be awarded only after:

completion of a rigorous teacher education program

passage of the National Teachers' Examination

demonstrated competency in internship and residence program

The Carnegie National Board, a majority of whom would eventually be elected by board-certified teachers, would set high standards for competence which would be reflected in national certification standards. Different levels of certification would reflect a differentiated career ladder. Alternate means of preparation for a license would be permissible so long as standards are at least as high as those of conventional programs. States would continue to issue licenses in the Carnegie Plan, but the hope is that the standard of voluntary national certification would eventually be adopted by the states.

The Governors' National Board, a majority of whom would be teachers elected by their peers, would define standards and award national certificates. The states, however, would continue to issue licenses.

Professional Teacher Examinations

All the reports propose to raise standards of entry into the profession. The Holmes Group report, however, suggests the most explicit sequence of professional standards which might be met through examination and other means.

"Students admitted to teacher education will be required to demonstrate basic mastery of writing and speaking.

Prior to a clinical internship, students will be expected to pass an examination demonstrating their mastery of the subject they will teach, their skill in lesson planning, and their instructional delivery.

During their work in classroom, prospective teachers will be required to observe and evaluate a variety of teaching styles, including their own, and to present evidence of analytic skill in this area as part of their professional portfolio for advancement."

TOPIC II

TEACHER EDUCATION AND PREPARATION

Undergraduate Education

The AFT, Carnegie, and Holmes Group Reports all endorse a strong liberal arts program for prospective teachers. Both the Carnegie and the Holmes Group report explicitly call for the abolition of the undergraduate education major. The Holmes Group, further, suggests that undergraduate education generally suffers from lack of coherence, lack of focus, and lack of good teaching models. It must, therefore, be reformed.

Graduate Preparation

The Carnegie Report proposes Masters in Teaching programs which would be "intellectually solid" and reflect the emerging consensus about what teachers need to know and to be able to do.

The Carnegie Report also explicitly endorses "special financial incentives" by the State to encourage minority enrollment in graduate programs.

The Holmes Group Report states that a program of professional studies must consist of the study of:

teaching and schooling as an academic field

the particular pedagogy of the subject matter discipline

the skills of classroom teaching

ethical responsibilities and values

The Holmes Group also believes that we must begin the work of articulating the knowledge base of the profession and developing the means with which it can be imparted.

Clinical Experience

The AFT, Carnegie, and Holmes Group Report all endorse structured clinical experience prior to entry into the profession.

The AFT Report calls for a one-year internship under the supervision of a knowledgeable teacher. Experienced teachers should be involved in the planning and development of these programs.

The Carnegie Report also supports clinical experience, including internships and residences. They also endorse the idea of "clinical schools" which train teachers while educating the young.

The Holmes Group Report proposes the establishment of "Professional Developmental Schools" in public school systems, analogous to teaching hospitals in the medical profession, where teachers-in-training would gain their clinical experience under the shared supervision of university professors and professional teachers.

In-Service Staff Development

The AFT, Carnegie, and Holmes Group Reports all favor efforts to strengthen the continued growth of a teacher throughout the span of a career.

In order to insure that teachers stay abreast of developments in their fields and prepare for advanced teacher certificates developed by the National Board, the Carnegie Report recommends that:

colleges and universities develop appropriate programs

local school districts and teachers collaborate to establish staff development centers

National Board standards for recertification eventually be used as guides for continuing education

The Holmes Group believes that the Professional Development Schools will provide important opportunities for career teachers to continue to grow and improve. They will be able to:

contribute to the development of knowledge in their profession.

form collegial relationships beyond their immediate working environment.

grow intellectually as they mature professionally.

National Service

The Holmes Group also calls for a system of National Service (modeled on ROTC) to attract talented graduates to teaching who lack professional training.

TOPIC III

SCHOOL STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

All of the reports propose the restructuring of school organizations with greater authority and greater professional status for teachers.

The AFT Report calls for the abolition of the hierarchical "factory model" of schools. The AFT believes that teachers must assume more responsibility and become self-regulating. The organization of learning should put students' needs above bureaucratic convenience.

The Carnegie Report supports a "professional environment for teaching" with greater professional autonomy for teachers. In this "collegium", they would work collaboratively in setting goals and then be held collectively responsible for attaining them under the guidance of a "lead teacher." This report also advocates reduction in bureaucratic regulation with teachers entrusted and empowered to make curriculum and organizational decisions. This report, finally, asks that resources, time, and support staff be provided to make teachers more effective and productive.

The Holmes Group Report also proposes that schools be better places for teaching and learning. The "new profession" of teaching will require better working conditions. The report specifically criticizes the current division of authority between administrators and teachers as being "seriously out-of-step" with these requirements.

The Governor's Report also supports "redesigning of the organization of schools to create a more productive working and learning environment." In order to accomplish this goal, the Governor's Report also believes that teachers will have to be more "involved" in decisions about discipline, school goals, their own continuing education, curriculum, and school-wide problem-solving. Decisions must be made closer to the classroom. The Governor's Report calls for a "loose/tight" approach to regulation. State and local policy-makers should collaborate with educators to set standards and be explicit about expected performance.

TOPIC IV

DIFFERENTIATED STAFFING AND PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT

All of the reports propose to reorganize teaching as a career in order to enhance opportunitites for advancement. All of the reports also propose changes in certification standards and procedures to reflect this restructuring of the career of teaching.

The AFT Report links advanced certification to opportunities for career advancement. It suggests that teachers should have the option of working ten, eleven, or twelve month work years.

The Carnegie Report also proposed the advanced certificate, the standards for which would serve to guide the continuing education of career teachers. The report also suggests the creation of a "lead teacher" role, which would be filled by advanced certificate holders who would have significant decision-making responsibility in curriculum, budget, and even the selection of a principal.

The Governor's Report states that "the teaching career is flat. Advancement means moving out of the classroom." It proposes "alternative career structures" to provide increased responsibility.

The Holmes Report develops the most explicit differentiated structure. It proposes "to recognize differences in knowledge, skills, and commitment among teachers by establishing three levels of differentiation:

Career Teacher	20% of a staff with school responsibility as well as classroom responsibility.
Professional Teacher	full autonomy in the classroom
Instructor	under the supervision of a professional teacher.

Certification, again, would be revised to reflect this differentiated pattern.

Instructor	Entry level under the supervision of a professional teacher
Professional Teacher	Practitioner status with high level of autonomy in the classroom
Career Teacher	Highest professional status consisting of approximately 20% of a staff having school responsibility as well as classroom responsibility.

TOPIC V

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

Schools and Colleges, Schools and Government, Schools and the Private Sector

All the reports espouse greater collaboration within the school system among administrators, unions, parents, and teachers. Advocacy of collaboration with agencies outside the school system also runs through all of the reports. Explicitly and implicitly, they assume that such effort will strengthen and improve schools.

The AFT Report states that state and local communities have a stake in setting goals, but teachers should have the autonomy to determine the means to achieve these goals. The AFT Report also advocates partnerships of government, the private sector, the minority community and the schools to enhance minority achievement in schools and to encourage the recruitment of minority group members into teaching.

The Carnegie Report also advocates collaboration among all interested parties, to improve schools. It agrees that state and local policy-makers must deregulate in order to invest teachers as partners in improvement but recommends balancing autonomy with accountability.

The Governor's Report offers a "New Compact" between teachers and the public which would provide the same balance. "The public must offer teachers a professional work environment and all that goes with it...Teachers, for their part, must offer the public a commitment to the highest standard of professional competence."

TOPIC VI

TEACHER COMPENSATION

Higher Salaries

The AFT, Carnegie, and Governor's Reports all advocate higher salaries.

The AFT Report calls for:

- state mandated minimum salaries.
- higher entry salaries as well as higher salaries throughout the salary schedule to retain experienced teachers and to attract former teachers back into the profession.

The Carnegie Report states that the "entering, average, and the range of teachers' salaries should be increased to levels adequate to attract and retain teachers of high academic ability." The report also proposes that salaries and benefits must be competitive with other professions.

The Governors' Report recommends the improvement of teacher compensation "at entry and throughout the career."

Linkage Between Salary and Performance

Both the Carnegie and the Governors' Reports endorse connecting quality of service to compensation.

The Carnegie Report criticizes current practices that reward "seniority and the accumulation of credits." The report advocates "compensation policies that create a set of positive incentives for excellence." One incentive would link teacher compensation to school-wide student performance.

The Governors' Report also recommends the alignment of teacher incentives with school and student performance. It, too, criticizes salary schedules which advance teachers on the basis of seniority and additional course work.

Restructured Salary Schedules

The Carnegie Report suggests a model for a new salary policy that recognizes other factors than simply years in service and number of credits. The report advocates a salary system based on:

Job Function
(differing levels of responsibility produce differing salaries)

Levels of Certification
(differentiated certification as developed by the National Certification Board produce an equitable basis for making salary decisions)

Seniority
(experience is essential to growth and higher compensation)

Productivity
(improved student performance should mean more money. The report emphasizes that this differential might be recognized on a school-wide basis

Teacher Mobility

The Carnegie Report also recommends that "artificial barriers to teacher mobility" be dismantled. Three examples are:

retirement system penalties for teachers who relocate

lack of reciprocity among states on certification

local salary caps on new teachers entering school systems.

Reform of these practices would lead to a "free labor market."

More Equitable Distribution of Teachers

The Carnegie Report suggests salary incentives at every level to insure that the best teachers work with pupils most in need of help:

states should provide scholarships to recruit promising minority group candidates to teaching

states should provide salary supplements to teachers in high-need districts

districts should offer incentives to teachers who work in high-need schools.

TOPIC VII

PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND CHOICE

All of the reports reaffirm the importance of parent participation in setting educational goals for schools.

The Carnegie and Governor's Report include additional recommendations which affirm parental involvement and choice.

Open Enrollment

The Carnegie Report suggests a number of "market approaches" to provide incentives for school improvement which have the effect of increasing parent choice of schools:

creation of specialty schools with enrollment drawn from throughout the district

open enrollment among all the public schools of a district

open enrollment across district lines with per-pupil allocations of funds following pupils

The Governor's Report states that increasing parent choice increases excellence. It recommends:

expanded opportunity for families to select among public schools in their state

permission for juniors and seniors in high school to attend accredited public post-secondary institutions with tax funds following students

TOPIC VIII

TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION

Only the Governor's Report directly addresses this issue. It states that "despite more than a billion dollars in purchases and an incalculable amount in donations nationally during the past few years, schools generally have not become more productive through the use of technology. This situation must change, and we can help.

The Governor's Task Force on Technology advocates support in four areas:

support demonstrations that include our waiving state regulations, if necessary, to document what is cost-effective and efficient at the school site

support and sponsor research and development in education technologies either individually or through a consortium of states

support the creation of market mechanisms

support and encourage all school districts to develop plans for using technologies and provide training for teachers in the use of them.

RESPONDING TO THE REPORTS: A CALL FOR ACTION

From the reports, as summarized in the preceding pages, it is clear that major changes are ahead for public education. It is no longer a matter of whether or not reform efforts will go forward, but now a matter of a concern over who will be providing the primary leadership and whether or not an overall plan will be developed to implement reform proposals. The reports are curiously silent on both of these issues.

Since leadership will, to a great extent, determine the direction that the reform initiatives will take, the matter of "who will provide the leadership", takes on great significance. If the leadership comes by private foundations, teachers' unions, business groups or political agencies, superintendents may exert little influence on the reform of the profession over which they now preside. In that political agencies often lack the ability to actually implement change, it is unlikely that much leadership will come from this source. To such, the appearance of change is often sufficient to indicate that something has been accomplished. Superintendents therefore, must either provide the primary leadership themselves, or face the prospect of accepting the direction for reform as set by teachers' unions, private foundations, government agencies, or possibly even private sector business and industry.

The eventual success or failure of most of the reform efforts may also depend as much on the creation of a plan to implement the changes, as upon the quality of the proposals themselves. Designing manageable ways to deal with the complexity and magnitude of the total reform movement is a critical, but necessary, task. Experience and good judgement dictate that we not assume that we can get from recommendations to broad application, without intermediate steps. Sound research procedures demand that we not assume that all reform proposals will necessarily improve education. Reason and logic support the notion that most, if not all, major reform recommendations should be validated in experimental situations, to determine their potential for truly improving education. In this context, putting into place a system that would support projects to test the feasibility of reform proposals, seems to be of fundamental importance.

Further, it has been observed that education in the United States is, by Constitutional designation, a state function. As a result, there is no National Educational System. Instead, there are fifty unique state systems that have some common qualities, but too many differences to permit treatment as one system. A National Policy Statement supporting education reform may be helpful, and some broad policy issues and other matters, such as standards for the teaching profession, may be handled on a national scale. In general, however, proposals for restructuring public education are too pervasive and complex to handle effectively in any way, other than on a state by state basis.

In that public education is fragmented by the fifty state configuration and, since sound practice dictates that reform proposals be tested before being institutionalized as genuine school improvements, the development of a model system appears to be a sensible and rational approach to school reform. If such a model system were to be developed in New York, it could certainly be designed to encourage broad scale experimentation before conclusions were reached about statewide dissemination. Further, elements of the model, if not the entire model would be transferrable to other states where reform efforts are also underway. The effectiveness of such a system would likely be increased by having it under the jurisdiction of the Education Commissioner and the Regents, but structured in a way that would permit it to function independent and outside of the existing bureaucratic structure.

Creating A Condition of Readiness

There are reasons to believe that the initial step in creating a state model for school reform would be that of generating a state of awareness or a threshold of readiness on the part of a very broad audience (i.e. governor, state legislature, commissioner, regents, superintendents, principals, teachers, parents, union leaders, college and university personnel, business leaders).

At the outset there is a serious question as to whether or not there exists the political will at the highest levels of governance and leadership to deal with the critical issues related to major educational reform initiatives. An early answer to this question would be required before spending time on specific reform proposals.

In addition, qualitative reform, much less the total restructuring of public education, will not be achieved through more regulations, laws, mandates, and requirements. Beyond a heightened awareness of the needs and a collation of the proposed remedies, serious thought must be given as to how lasting improvements will be achieved.

Further, the recommendations of the "second wave" reports are sufficiently comprehensive as to suggest that the complete restructuring of public education is needed, rather than just the reform of the existing organization. It would be risky to assume that all constituent groups (i.e. legislative and executive government branches, teachers, school boards, unions, superintendents, principals, college and university professors and leaders, minority communities) operate from the same knowledge base with respect to what restructuring implies, the perceived needs, and suggested remedies.

In New York, the superintendents should be the leaders, not just the catalysts, for developing this high level of awareness and needed readiness, before reform action can occur. They should study the reports and know the reform recommendations that could significantly alter their schools. They should alert their boards, employees, and constituents to the reform efforts and provide insight as to how local schools may be affected. If school improvement committees involving parents, students, teachers, business people, board members, and administrators are not in place, they should be created. Such groups should be instrumental in determining the reform measures that need only local initiative and resources.

This leadership should also be demonstrated beyond the local school district boundaries at regional and state levels. This could be achieved, in part, by calling for the convening of a high level school reform colloquium to deal

with the readiness issue. Such a colloquium should involve representatives from all constituent groups. The agenda of this prestigious convocation would include at least two significant issues.

Identifying and dealing with the major issues that represent potential barriers to serious reform efforts

Pinpointing the leadership for each of a number of major components within the total reform initiative (i.e., reform of teacher education, changing the structure and governance of schools, altering teacher compensation, developing entry level standards for the profession).

Identifying The Major Issues

Placing the issues that may represent barriers to reform high on the agenda for an initial convocation may appear to be a negative gesture. In reality, however, it would be naive to consider sweeping recommendations for change without discussing known constraints or obstacles. To solve a problem one must know all of the elements, including the constants and the variables.

While it may be impossible to identify all of the issues that may be potential barriers to serious reform, many are apparent even to the most casual observers of the educational scene. The following issues, categorized for convenience as political, financial and economic, legal and conceptual are intended to serve only as examples of the type of critical topics that would likely emerge in any serious discussions on the future of school reform.

Political Issues:

1. Will governors, state legislators, superintendents, union leaders, and school board members exercise the political will to deal with the tough issues they have boldly pronounced or endorsed?

2. Can the public be led to place education at the highest priority level for purposes of funding? This involves both a public willingness and public capacity to bear the financial burden.

3. Can Boards of Education, Superintendents, and Union Leaders set aside the restrictions of negotiated contracts to engage testing, experimentation and, eventually, broadscale implementation of successful reform initiatives?

4. Can State Legislators, State Boards, and Commissioners return educational decision-making to local school districts?

Financial & Economic Issues:

At a time when some states (New York excluded) are stabilizing or reducing financial aid to public education and the Federal Government is reducing its participation in financing public education, serious financial issues must be addressed.

1. From where will the massive infusion of needed money come?

2. Can the matters related to the sources of funding, the adequacy of funding and the distributions of funds be addressed? This relates specifically to the equity and excellence issues.

3. Will the Federal Government become as involved in financing reform as it has been in proposing reform?

4. Can the public be convinced to pay teachers at levels commensurate with private, independent practice professions?

5. Can the cost of reform be met considering the escalating costs of current operations and the costs of concurrently extending school services from the "womb to the tomb"?

6. Can educational reforms be correlated with fluctuations in school age populations, shifts in age distribution, in the general population, changing labor needs and major transitions in business and industry?

Legal Issues:

1. Can the myriad laws, regulations, judicial decisions, case laws, etc. be set aside to permit serious reform efforts to go forward? (Assuming the existence of a strong political will and adequate financing, reform efforts will be paralyzed without relief from legal constraints.)

2. Can the constraints imposed by negotiated labor contracts be suspended and the impact of continuous adversarial collective bargaining be reduced long enough, and to the extents necessary, to permit long term, meaningful reform?

3. Regulations and laws come into existence, in part, to protect the interests of needy groups. If schools are deregulated, how can they be required to respond to the needs of the disenfranchised and politically powerless?

4. Tenure laws and single salary schedules tend to have detrimental effects upon professional pride and the work ethic. Can acceptable alternatives be found to these issues that are so deeply rooted in law and collective bargaining agreements?

Conceptual Issues:

1. Can a set of national standards for entry into the teaching profession be developed that would be acceptable to all states? (This runs counter to the concepts of state and local autonomy, and education as primarily a state function.)

2. Is it possible, in view of geographic differences, urban, suburban and rural divisions, the increase in minority populations, disparities in wealth and resources, etc. to build school systems that address both the excellence and equity issues?

3. Can a participating management structure respond effectively to the problems posed by marginally productive/effective employees? Can teachers demand high performance of other teachers in a peer setting?

4. In compensation schemes keyed to pupil achievement, what teachers will want to teach special education children and other pupils with serious difficulties? Would the best teachers continue to opt to teach the best or could a system of assigning the best teachers to the most needy pupils be created?

5. While parental choice has political appeal, can stable schools exist with uncertain enrollments. How can significant parental choice be offered without resegregating the nation's schools and without trapping the poor in urban centers to an even greater extent than is the case today?

6. Can the teacher culture, built up over the last hundred years handle the kind of reform measures being proposed? Will teachers permit themselves to be held accountable for pupil achievement?

Pinpointing the Leadership

As previously mentioned, there are too many facets to the educational restructuring/reform movement for any single group, agency, individual or organization to provide all of the needed leadership. Next to delineating the most critical reform issues that must be dealt with, perhaps the second most important outcome of a high level colloquium would be the identification of an organization, agency or consortium of several groups to volunteer to assume the primary leadership role for each of several key components of the reform initiative. Certainly, superintendents have a vested interest in all eight of the issues identified earlier in this paper. The scope and complexity of the

issues, however, dictate that the primary leadership responsibilities be spread among the major interested groups. For example, changing the structure and governance of local schools is clearly in the domain of superintendents, principals, and boards of education, while the reform of teacher education will have a greater chance of succeeding if college and university personnel lead the way.

The Commissioner, the Governor and the State Legislature would have to show unprecedented initiative if the matters of teacher advancement, compensation of teachers, and professionalizing the profession are to be realized. Teachers, union leaders, and principals should have a common interest in pulling parents back into the process of educating children. Business and industry leaders have as much to gain, or more, than the education community, by providing leadership to expand the use of technology in schools.

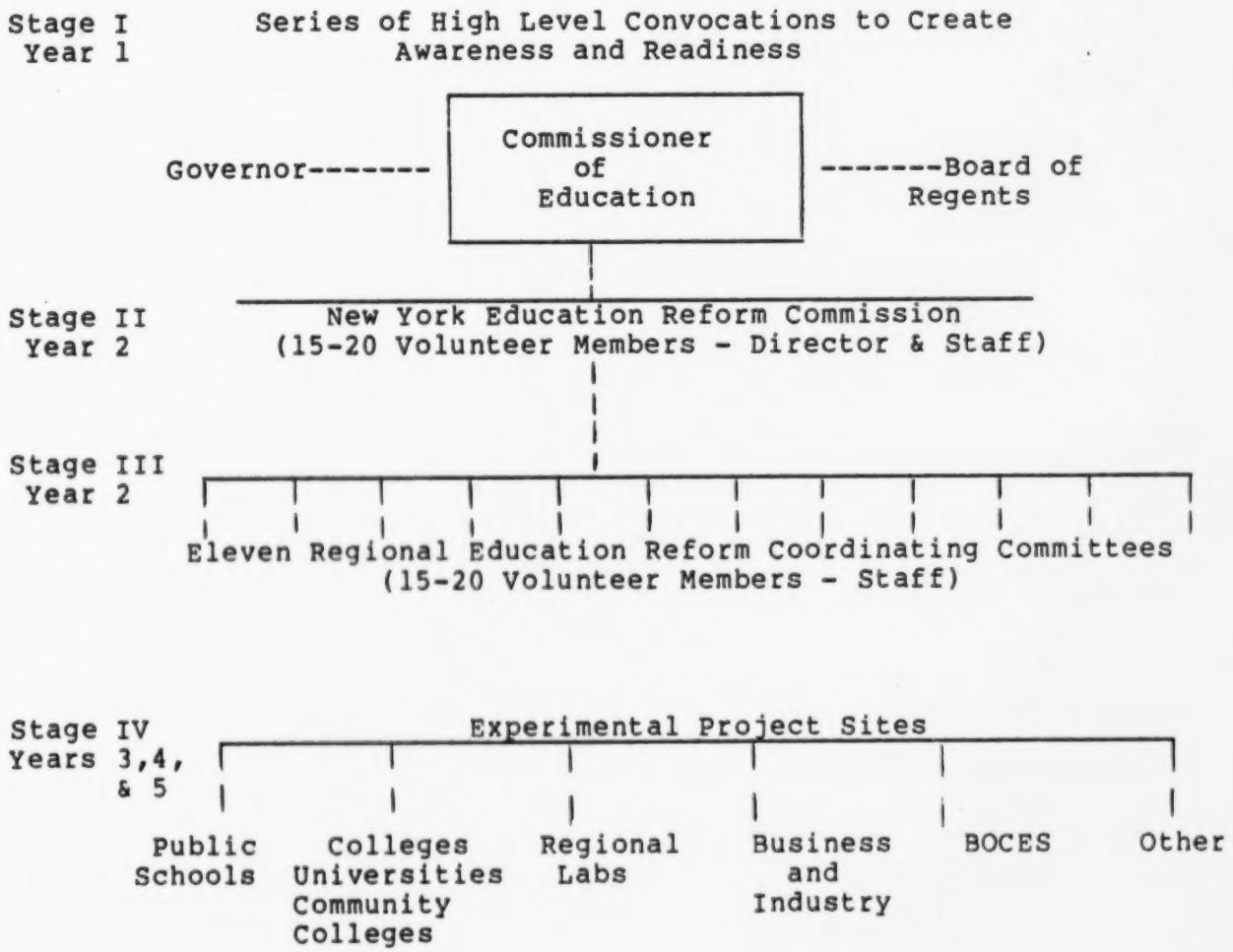
To identify a specific source of leadership or to have an organization or consortium of agencies assume primary leadership responsibility, would not exclude the participation of individuals and/or segments from all participating groups. In truth, all of the components are so interrelated that broad participation on most issues will be essential, not just desirable.

Creating An Organizational Framework

Assuming that a high level colloquium, or a series of such meetings, could create the desired state of readiness and trusting that mutual agreement could be reached on ways to handle some of the political, legal, financial and conceptual barriers, the next step in bringing reform recommendations closer to reality would be for superintendents to boldly request the establishment of an organizational framework to begin the systematic testing of selected proposals. New York could demonstrate its pre-eminent leadership among the states by being the first to develop an organizational framework to deal exclusively with long term, systematic education reform within the State. Such a framework would make it possible to validate many of the reform recommendations and to test many of the assumptions about improvements, before broadscale change is attempted. Ultimately, this framework could serve as the disseminating network for successful reform efforts and possibly a model for other states.

To this end, the Commissioner of Education, acting independently or in concert with the Board of Regents and/or the Governor should be encouraged to create a State Education Reform Commission that would, in turn, set up the statewide network and coordinate all of the longterm reform initiatives. The functional units of the organization would be at regional and local levels. If the existing Occupational Education Planning Regions were to serve as the regional

ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK
TO ACHIEVE EDUCATION REFORM IN NEW YORK



divisions, each would need a representative governing committee to coordinate local projects, experimental centers and collaborative ventures within the region. The Regional coordinating committees would receive and screen project proposals, allocate resources, evaluate results and provide feedback to the State Commission on what does or does not work.

Operating under the aegis of the regional committees, the individual districts, colleges and universities, BOCES organizations, and consortia within the region could submit proposals for reform-related projects. Such proposals would follow a standard format and include all of the elements of a well conceived experiment (i.e. experimental design, time line, required resources, evaluation design, etc.). Within each region selected reform initiatives could be tested. Many projects could proceed simultaneously at a variety of sites with different organizations and agencies providing the primary leadership. (Note: The National Diffusion Network, the Comprehensive Instructional Management Systems field testing network, the Occupational Planning System and other such systems have organizational components similar to those needed for an educational reform network.)

The large number of recommendations in the reform literature would require that, for experimental purposes, the number of major topics and the number of issues under each topic be limited to the most critical and/or the most substantive ones.

By way of illustration, the reform of teacher education in New York is a significant topic. The elimination of undergraduate schools of education and the establishment of graduate professional schools are related propositions that may best be tried in an experimental setting before all colleges and universities move in this direction.

Changing the structure and governance of public schools is a substantive proposal that may best be dealt with by experimenting with a variety of school based management formats and new leadership systems to determine which patterns will lead to the highest levels of productivity.

Providing new opportunities for professional advancement within the teaching profession, differentiated staffing, and the elimination of single schedule salary guides for teachers are timely and provocative topics. It would make sense to conduct limited scale experimentation in all three areas before wholesale change is attempted.

More extensive use of technology in the instruction process, creative ways to re-engage parents in the education of their children, new attempts at collaborative projects between schools, businesses, colleges and universities, and many other reform proposals are equally pervasive and systemic and in need of testing before extensive change is suggested. The issues mentioned here are representative only.

Identifying Financial Resources

Of equal importance with the readiness issue, the creation of a commission and construction of an organizational framework to achieve school reform,is the matter of identifying and committing financial resources.

Talk of educational reform has come at a time when the federal government is reducing its financial support for public education. With the noteable exception of New York's $2.4 billion increase in State Aid over the past four years, reform recommendations abound when some states can hardly maintain funding at existing levels. It, therefore, seems imperative that the matter of financial resources be given highest priority. Although money is not the only ingredient, it is of great importance. The reform movement will go nowhere without substantial funding.

In New York, a serious commitment to school reform should be demonstrated by the creation and funding of a State Reform Commission that would, in turn set up the statewide system to test the validity of many of the most significant reform proposals. As previously affirmed, there is little hope for long term, substantive reform if many of the fundamental issues, assumptions, and recommendations cannot first be tested in controlled settings. If funds are not made available to prove measures on a small scale, then large scale application would be out of the question.

A variety of funding sources should be considered to underwrite the cost of initial organized reform efforts. Federal and State governments should be interested in funding experimental projects that would prepare the way for broadscale reform in years to come. The private foundations, corporations and other agencies that have dramatically focused national attention on education reform should offer financial support to see their proposals tested and implemented. Business and industry should also be encouraged to invest some of their research dollars to help restructure the educational systems they have so soundly criticized.

The State of New York should move deliberately but quickly to provide all that is needed to move from recommendations and position statements to reality, to set the example for the rest of the nation, and to demonstrate its serious intentions toward major educational reform.

SUGGESTIONS FOR LOCAL INITIATIVES

A fundamental position advanced in this paper is that Superintendents should urge that carefully planned experiments be conducted throughout New York State to test the validity of the reform movement's major recommendations, and that such experiments should be coordinated on a state-wide level to insure that reliable field-based data are available prior to the adoption of state and national change. Such a strategy may, however, take several years to implement, years during which the local school system, under the leadership of the superintendent of schools, can move toward realizing at least some of the reform literature's recommendations. The following pages highlight a number of possible initiatives that superintendents might attempt at the local level in the absence of the structure described earlier in this paper.

Standards

Superintendents should seek to influence the formation and composition of the National Standards Board, and insist that any standards that are to be set at any level and by any agency be specifically and directly linked to competency.

Teacher Education and Preparation

Local school districts should form close working relations with teacher training institutions to insure that internships are carefully structured and monitored, and that teachers in training receive the highest possible pre-professional experience. The local school district should begin mentor programs designed to launch beginning teachers as supportively and purposefully as possible. In addition, the school system should improve and expand staff development programs for teachers so that a career in teaching comes to be synonymous with life-long learning.

School Structure and Governance

Individual schools should be encouraged to test the effectiveness of teacher empowerment and school-based management. Lead teachers' roles should be established. Staffing patterns and class size practices should be altered to allow additional time for peer assistance, collaborative planning, field-based educational research, and other activities that promote greater control by teachers over the nature of their work.

Differentiated Staffing/Professional Advancement

The school system should seek state assistance for eliminating the rules and regulations that inhibit the differentiation of teacher's roles, and should consider ways to restructure salary guides and professional advancement opportunities. Financial resources should be sought to establish a wide variety of incentive programs and career ladders.

Collaborative Efforts

Schools should seek opportunities to establish internship programs for teachers with colleges, business, and industry. Teacher exchange and career development programs should be established to allow teachers to explore alternative assignments within schools and colleges and within non-school work sites.

Teacher Compensation

Superintendents should encourage government leaders to support experimental alternatives to salary schedules and other specific terms and conditions of employment that inhibit innovation and flexibility. Superintendents should insist that federal and state leaders exert the political will necessary to make adequate funds available for increasing teachers' salaries, and should seek funding for experimental compensation schemes based on job function, level of competence, seniority, and productivity.

Parent Involvement

Superintendents should encourage principals to establish school improvement committees that give a significant voice to parents. More broadly, schools should provide a variety of opportunities that encourage parental involvement in school programs. At the same time, schools should develop programs to help parents learn more effective parenting skills.

Technology

Local schools should be encouraged to experiment with a variety of technologically driven instructional delivery systems, such as interactive television, distance learning, and tutorial computer programs. Resources should be used to support teachers in developing innovative applications of existing technology to instructional priorities.

SUMMARY

In the preparation of position papers there is always the temptation to simply respond in an "agree or disagree" fashion to the major premises of national studies and reports. It is also often convenient to respond in a "yes, but...." manner, acknowledging the merits of certain proposals but focusing on all of the reasons why things can or cannot be done. In contrast to these reactions there has been a deliberate effort made to make this response paper an action proposal. The introductory pages convey the committee's rationale for the action plan called for in the body of the paper, and the major portion of the text summarizes the major reports, focuses on the need for leadership, addresses the constraints to school reform, suggests a framework for testing reform recommendations, and puts forth a call for concerted action.

This call for unified action does not overlook the fact that meritorious reform activities have already begun on a limited scale in New York and other states. The fact remains however, that in proportion to the magnitude of the challenge that must be addressed, relatively little is being accomplished. It is with concern, therefore, that one reads the results of a survey by the American Association of School Administrators which reported that most districts do not even intend to make any changes as a result of the Carnegie Report and other similar papers. It is in response to these realities that this paper proposes a systematic, long term plan for achieving major school reform and a call for superintendents to provide the leadership.

The abstracts included in this report were not intended as substitutes for the complete publications, but rather to convey to the reader the basic positions of four distinguished groups on selected reform topics. Thoughtful reading of these documents and considered judgement based on leadership experience lead to the following conclusions:

1. Because of the diversity among states in terms of priorities and manageability, school reform is envisioned as being best achieved on a state by state basis rather than on a national scale.

2. Testing the validity of reform recommendations before making wholesale changes is presented as a rational and manageable approach to long term reform. A model program for achieving this goal is outlined in the text.

3. Identifying the political, financial, legal and conceptual constraints to reform is viewed as being essential to the process of achieving readiness. Similarly, finding leadership to facilitate a simultaneous assault on many reform issues is viewed as part of the readiness exercise.

4. Establishing an organizational framework consisting of an independent state reform commission with a state, regional and local network, is recommended as the primary means of getting from recommendations to reality, using a systematic, experimental and research based approach.

5. Acquiring adequate resources for reform efforts is portrayed as the all pervasive contingency on which the future of school reform rests. Without a commitment to massive infusions of money, the condition of readiness will never be achieved, the organizational framework never built, the recommendations never tested, and major education reform never achieved.

Woven into the fabric of this paper is the conviction that education reform generally, and reform in New York specifically, will not be realized if superintendents do not assert themselves as the leaders they need to be. Beginning with a thorough understanding of the reports and their implications, the superintendent's role in following through with the leadership to achieve readiness and identify constraints, to create the framework and to identifying financial resources is critical.

Finally, no matter how many prestigious reports are published, how many response papers are written or the level of government from which recommendations emanate, qualitative reform will only come about through action. Responsible reform action will require the emergence of strong leadership, and the commitment of financial resources. New York has nearly unlimited capacity in both areas. In the final analysis it will be the exercise of political will, or the failure to do so, that will determine the fate of education reform in New York.

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